

## Tradition, Child Labour, Religious Misconception, Insecurity among Women and Under-Aged Educational Achievement in North-Eastern Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria

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**Abstract :** The purpose of this paper is to investigate the association between tradition, child labour, religion, and insecurity factors with the educational achievement of under-aged in the North-eastern Nigeria. Female children are denied education in contrast with their male counterparts due to tradition, religious misconception. Female under-aged, as the product of the denial to education during childhood are molded into adult without education. Using available scholarly literature, the researchers conceptually explored the factors impeding the womenfolk and the educational achievement of under-aged. The findings indicated that tradition, child labour, religious misconception, insecurity drastically affect women and the educational achievement of under-aged. Theoretically, the study contributed in literature provision on educational achievement. Methodologically, the study made contributions in filling gaps in studying insufficient literacy among women under-aged educational achievement. Practically, the ministries of education, youth development and women's affairs can apply the result to improve the life of woman and the educational achievement of under-aged in relation to tradition, child labour religious misconception and insecurity.

**Keywords:** Educational achievement, Child labour, religious misconceptions, Insecurity

### Introduction

Krapohl, *et al.* (2014) defined the concept of educational achievement as to have the mastery of a particular content, which includes the knowhow (knowledge) and skills related with literacy, science and numeracy. The concept of achievement therefore, is contrasting the word 'ability', meaning succeeding through certain efforts. He argued that environment relatively influences one's efforts rather than ability. Therefore, the dichotomies between under-ages in their educational achievement are solely environmentally inclined. Ugwumba and Odom (2015) noted that the right of the citizen to acquire education is synonymous with the right to have food and shelter. According to article 26 of the 1996 declaration of the human rights rules that "everyone has the right to education". Apart from being a right, education is also the bedrock for human and societal development. Education offers opportunities, freedom and contributes in fostering peace, democratic tranquility and economic growth. Education also ushers in poverty alleviation and improves health challenges. Ultimately, education aims at achieving sustainable development, youth

development without gender difference (Ugwumba, *et al.*, 2015).

One of the major cultural traits staging challenge in the life of women and under-aged is lack of parental literacy as a result of little or no value for education. Parents in most cases perceive their female child as a weaker sex, whose status is limited to the home environment. They achieve this definition of their female children by giving them out for marriage at their tender age of 12-15. This gesture truncates their educational achievement (Krapohl, *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, education of female children and women in society is not preferred to that of male adults and male under-aged. Illiteracy is mostly the major causality of falling victim to VVF, HIV/AIDS, while sometimes they suffer from certain diseases such as loss of focus, psychological trauma, lack of confidence and extreme poverty. She is also vulnerable to violation of their fundamental human rights by their husbands, members of the extended families of the husbands, their co-wives. The under-aged according to Bland, (Ed.). 2015, female under-aged is engaged in hawking and beggars' guide at street begging. In the global population,

women are estimated not less than 50% which supposed to greatly contribute in human endeavor in the aspect of economy, social and political participation. They are seen as mothers, arrangers of the social system, home keepers and defenders of humanity. But unfortunately, they are left unlettered in society.

It is apparent that many previous studies only focused narrowly on conceptualization of educational achievement among under-aged and women, thereby having a dearth of researches studying the more inclusive principle of scientific research. Some of the researches that have attempted to link educational achievement of women and under-aged had reported mixed findings. Contradictory to findings of previous scholars such as that of Myhill, *et al.*, (2004), which had in their result of study argued that having been studying four focus groups of high-achieving female under-aged and male under-aged, and on the other hand were the underachieving male under-aged and female under-aged were all studied on the ambience of gender identity.

They were generally perceived as the high-achieving boys who were seen largely as being a challenge to gender norm of human society. The result showed that there was an indication that there exists an association between high achievement among under-aged and under achievement (Jones & Myhill, D., 2004). Certain studies looked at the link between socio-economic factors and the child development. Again, in the tail of their review, they proposed a newly developed integrative model made with the intent of guiding future study of the relationship between socio-economic factors and human development (Bornstein & Bradley 2003, Bradley & Corwyn 2002, and Conger, 2002).

### Literature Review

Literature reviewed suggested that a systematic research on the impact of traditional practices in relation with misconception on educational achievement of under-aged and women in the context of impact of traditional practices, is lacking. While several studies have argued that educational achievement and traditional practices and other factors as a vehicle for enhancing the educational achievement, measuring it with traditional practices, religious misconception, and socio-economic is still rudimentary. Therefore, the relationship between tradition, religious misconceptions and socio-economic factors among educational achievement of under-aged and women is the concern of few studies. That is to say, researches investigating the association between educational achievement and tradition, religious misconceptions and socio-economic factors among under-aged and women in society are still dearth and at early stage. However, only a relatively little advancement made subsequently in theorizing or

research approaches on the effects of tradition, religious misconceptions and socio-economic factors among under-aged and women. However, no particular previous research has been directed towards investigating the association between the educational achievement of women and under-aged with the North-eastern region of Nigeria.

### The Traditional Almajiri School

The aims and purposes of education in society are widely philosophical. To educate children is to prepare them for adulthood. They are also educated in order to direct them towards their achievement in accordance with their parents' desire to see them through to adult life. It is therefore possible for man to educate his children in a different way others are being taught based on general values and beliefs (Anthony O'hear, 1981). The under-aged in the almajiri school is where the children who were sent by their parents to learn the Qur'an by rote under the watch of Mallam (religious teacher). In this system, learning encompasses Arabic Alphabets, texts for prayers and the ability of the learners to copy the texts in the language. The classes were organized in the Mallam's house, in the open under tree and mosques. The mostly spread was the primary level. Those children from well-to-do homes and more educated had been able to have exposure to the learning of the Arabic literature. They further went ahead to learn grammar, arithmetic, logic, algebra, theology and rhetoric were included. The misconceptions among parents of formal education had been very negative.

Anthony O'hear, (1981) observed that parents in the then Northern Nigeria misconceived western education as having negative impact in the lives of their children. They saw education as a source of aggravation of recklessness among youths which resulted to drugging attitude. They also saw it as the root of European political overriding the African traditional system. There saw a change in mentality and alterations in the belief system from the African worship full of poetic oration. The naming rituals of new born baby, marriage and burial ceremonies were not the same with the newly introduced approaches. The traditional attires were also replaced by the imported ones which are not in consonance with the African cultures. The values of the people have been affected negatively due to the admixture of certain original and imported values.

From a religious perspective, to educate a girl-child is to educate a nation, but to educate a boy-child is to educate an individual as in the Hadith (Tradition of the Prophet). Girl-child education as being encouraged through implementation of some projects in Africa and Asia, geared towards education for girls is now injecting education reforms in the areas where it proves a positive result. In India for example, the community

empowerment involving conditional cash transfer project introduced in 1990s, which later redirected to Africa is yielding positive results in changing the illiterate and economically poor status of adolescent girls in the two different continents (Walker, 2012).

### Under-Aged Labour

In the study undertaken by Mehrotra and Biggeri, Francavilla and Giannelli, (2010) argued that the challenges of child labour is a risky act highly related to parents' activities and those of relatives within the home environment. Mehrotra and Biggeri noted that in Indonesia and Pakistan child labour is rampant which is based on their involvement in industrial activities. However, the nature of insufficient studies on informal sector like individual family, as empirically attempted by Rani and Jeemol, (2009) to study the incidence of child work within the family platform the analysis of the research conducted in Indonesia and Pakistan ranging from 2000 to 2001, under the auspices of UNICEF, the results indicated that children working in the harsh condition within the household are defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as "home-workers" those under-aged seen as "child labourers" (Caroleo, Giannelli, and Pastore, 2016).

It is also argued the actual cost of acquiring jobs is adjudged fast falling as a result of the involvement of family units in petty family business. As a result of this bane, children living with the adults (the home workers) who have their personal businesses have a more risk of working in relation to those under-aged, irrespective of their gender divide. The outcome of the study indicated that a bivariate probity analysis supported the hypothesis in the two different countries (Pakistan and Indonesia). Francavilla and Giannelli, (2010) noted that the direct child control mothers have on the child's welfare, it is possible to have significance of negative effects of disadvantaged economic position in their family unit.

They made an assumption that certain literatures garnered by scholars like Behrman *et al.* (1999) and Basu (2006), studied the association of child labour and mothers' employment in India. The findings of the study indicated that child welfare solely depends on their mothers' presence in the family base. Their presence also positively increases the propensities of high level of the under-aged educational achievement and protection from hard labour. However, unemployed mothers send their children to school at the right time, and if the fathers have good employment positions, the family tends to be wealthier. In the case of working mothers, due to her low income, her children are most likely to become employees in the future, especially in rural areas.

Behrman, *et al.*, (1999) argued that parental investment in the educational pursuit of their

children contributes in the economic growth and development in society. Evidently, there is an essential contribution of under-aged schooling to augment workers' incomes in the countries whose employees earn low-income (Psacharopoulos 1994). The paucity of the availability of womenfolk's contributions and the problematic nature of low proliferation of information on their participation in the economic activities of society. Those advocating for poverty alleviation and development emphasizing the educational achievement of female adults and under-aged. This has a great effect on the human capital in the parameter of the younger generations (World Bank 1991; United Nations Development Program 1996).

Argumentatively, some strategists of development believe that better-educated women have the elements of superiority in the aspect of home based education, thereby making their personal investments to complement those in schools (for example, Forum for African Women Educationalists 1995). However, there exists a positive association between human capital of the under-aged and maternal schooling which controls the income and paternal education. Essentially too, there is an alternative meaning of such relationship hinging on the perspectives of households as a platform where individuals become optimistic and also bargain. Moreover, mothers with higher educational background are deemed as having superiority in their choice within and without the home base, hence their bounty household resources. They tend to allocate such resources to their children more than the fathers do (Folbre 1984, 1986; Thomas 1990; Haddad, Hoddinott, and Alderman 1997).

The opinion is compatible with the hypothesis which asserts that education in larger perspective augments skills within the home setting. These skills acquired by mothers apparently show that women's educational attainment contributes immensely even in the outside of home. It also implies that the increasing options for womenfolk within the labour market coupled with increased concrete investments in mothers' education is strategically essential in their bid to achieve more investments in the under-aged. However, increase in women's employment is in most cases very difficult to come by, which brings about low productivity in the household, in their efforts to create human capital. The men also have returns in their own educational attainment.

The concept of begging in human society has been a serious problematic syndrome in the developing countries like Nigeria. Many years of the practice of the begging profession indicate that various tactics were and still are being explored, as such making it appear as the same techniques of the practice defy any modern skill (Onoyase, 2010; John, 2006) argued that the only source to

understand the activities of beggars is the law enforcement and other criminal records. Street begging as a social problem is a commonplace in Northern Nigerian states of Sokoto, Kano, among others and those of the North-eastern parts of the country is a syndrome that encompasses not only under-aged, but also adults without any gender divide. The boys are seen in the evening carrying their bowls going from one household to another in search of food. They retire back to their abodes provided by their Mallams (teachers). However, the female under-aged beggars are seen mostly guiding adult blind women and men in the day times and evenings. Some of these beggars are in some cases destitute in the urban areas of the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria (Maishanu, 2006).

The under-aged beggars (Almajirai) are so enormous in Kano, despite the efforts put in by the state government under the leadership of Mallam Shekarau to decrease the incidence of begging. This effort brought about the enrollment of over one million students into a total number of about thirty thousand Islamic schools meant for that purpose. The under-aged beggars attend their tsangaya (school) in the morning after which they roam about the streets and households in the evening and afternoon to beg for food (Onoyase, 2007). Galadanci (2007), Islam emphatically made consistency in the direction of educational pursuit in search of knowledge irrespective of gender divide among members of any human society. This informs the necessity attached to the need for parents to send their under-aged, mostly boys in search of Islamic religious knowledge and Arabic education from other parts of the Northern Nigeria to Kano and other cities of that region.

Although the Islamic faithful have been instructed to go out in search of knowledge from both far and near distant destinations, there has never been any part of such instructions that encourage parents to neglect their children who embarked upon the search of knowledge. Unfortunately, the children not cared for by their parents, while their Mallams (teachers) are not under the care of the government nor the parents who never go to visit their wards at such informal schools (Galadanci 2007). The inability and or refusal of the parents to visit and enquire about the well-being of their young children, but abandoning them under the care of the unprotected teacher who is not on the payroll of the government. He is also not remitted any money by the parents of such children, thereby sending them to beg for food from peoples' houses and other public places. The teachers do not have accommodation, feeding and other provisions for the children. However, the final option for the teenagers becomes only the street begging (Adejumo, *et al.*, 2011).

Zakat (alms) as one of the five pillars of Islam is meant to assist the have-nots in society. However, the function that the zakat is meant for is not being

encouraged rather than incorporating younger and elderly beggars in their respective communities, while others go as far as other regions for begging (Adejumo, *et al.*, 2011). For example, from the far Northern part of Nigeria beggars troop down South in search of alms. They are found in Enugu, Lagos and Benin City, among others. In spite of its assistance being rendered to the 'have not' in society, zakat has not done anything tangible to help the situation of extreme poverty in the dominantly Muslim populated region of Northern Nigeria. This is due to the fact that a great number of able-bodied or sturdy individuals engaged in begging in order to benefit from alms which is not meant for them. This is because begging is not a profession for the able-bodied, but for those who are physically challenged.

Adejumo, *et al.*, (2011) argued that begging is a tradition attached to the belief of Hindu god called Shiva. This god had run his household by panhandling. He emphatically believed that Indians have been beggars for many generations. In the western world, the European women from poorer background of Bulgaria were found to have been sent out by certain organized gangs to collect alms from cities like Barcelona and submitted to the gangs. Carter and Schafer (1998) made a revelation that many people in Melbourne (Australia) beg for certain periods. Specifically, Northern America and Canada there exists a great number of beggars. They claimed that both visitors and residents meet people begging with their pans in the urban areas. That they hardly walked down the street without meeting one or more persons requesting for a spare change. Lee and Farrel (2003) studied in the United States the phenomenon of panhandling among the homeless individuals where it came to the limelight that a great number of beggars were male drug abusers and or mental derangement; while there were female peddlers. They were found to be without any children to carter for and mostly single.

### Religious Misconception

Early/forced is marriage contracted between girl-children of less than years of adulthood and elderly/young men. Judith Walker (2013) defined early marriage as the marrying out of female child at the tender age lower than the UN's stipulated age of 18 years. This marriage cuts off the educational achievement of the female under-aged since they are never allowed to continue their educational pursuit after wedding. They are better off if allowed to continue with their education and to marry at the age of 20-24 or 45-49 years, respectively. Sending young female children into marriage without sufficient education makes them victims of unequal relationships. They are married without the knowledge of how to live as wives in their marital homes. Due to lack of adequate knowledge about health related issues they are vulnerable to certain diseases like AIDS, VVF and



pregnancy complications. They are mostly married out before their 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> birthdays (Hassan, *et al.*, 2016; Bakibinga, 2015).

As many as 90% college graduate mothers of Japanese origin held a desire for under-aged education irrespective of their gender divide. There were also 55% of the mothers had the desire for their male children to go to college. About 25% had desire for female under-aged to go to college (Unterhalter, 2013). Contrarily, Northern Nigeria. Educational achievement in the northern part of Nigeria has been extremely low for many decades. This brings about a very low education performance among some of the states in the region. In Jigawa state about 7.8% of the female underage complete school, for example, only about 22% female secondary school students graduated in 2008 (Ajuwon, *et al.*, 2016). Zenn and Pearson, (2014) argued that some cultural traditions in Nigeria include restriction to the home and hair-shaving. Ifemeje (2012) argued that the Nigerian law has been adjudged as discriminatory against women, for example, "Section 55 of the penal code of Nigeria is legally backing the assault of women; while "Section 6 of the criminal code, because it lacks any legal recognition for rape against wife by her husband (Opidi, 2016).

Despite the existence of the free education policy in all the states of the federation of Nigeria, data were of the view that disparities exist significantly between female under-aged and male under-aged education (Yar'zever, *et al.*, 2013). Early/forced marriage is a commonplace in the entire Northern part of Nigeria. The female under-aged are given out for marriage immediately after puberty between the ages of 12 and 13 years. This age if critically pondered, is the period in which they are due for transiting to secondary school (Offorma, 2009).

The acceleration of Education for All (EFA) is in collaboration with government's education ministry with the government at federal level in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Northern Nigeria has been experiencing an acute poor education which resulted to some statistical records indicating some of the states as having very low performance in education. Jigawa state has been tagged one of the lowest with female under-aged school completion as only 7.8%; for instance, in 2008 only 22% secondary school was recorded among the female under-aged enrolment in accordance with the report by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2008). Despite the existence of the free education policy in all the states of the federation of Nigeria, data were of the view that disparities exist significantly between female under-aged and male under-aged education (Yar'zever, *et al.*, 2013).

Taking into consideration of the significant amount of variance in students' educational achievement as in 24% in Nigeria and 16% in Swaziland,

respectively, was not due to school and or classroom factors. This was also associated with the size of the class, school size and the age of the school and therefore had no effects on the educational achievement of the students. What really matters in the educational achievement of student is the teaching processes in both Nigeria and Swaziland (Lockheed, & Komenan, 1989). To seek for knowledge is very vital among Muslims, irrespective of gender divide as taught by the philosophy of Islam. Islam, (2016) commented that Islam teaches all followers to seek for knowledge and also teach those who need the knowledge. The aim of education in Islam is to produce descent and intellectual human to enable them duty bound to change the society for good. In society where women are educated they will have the higher propensities of having the skill to act in different positions within lucrative organisations.

### Insecurity

The definition of the concept of insecurity is impressionistically defined among scholars from different fields of studies. However, Udo (2015) saw insecurity as an individual of state being subjected to certain danger. Insecurity is a direct antithesis of security (Adamu, 2016). Insecurity is also defined as "the state fear and anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection". Therefore, insecurity is insufficient freedom from any danger Belend (2015). Education in the Northeastern part of Nigeria has been under Boko haram attack for six consecutive years. Most of the victims have been students, teachers, school buildings, government officials. This negative act has created a barrier in the direction of the quality of education for all (Ugwumba, & Odom, 2015). Preri, and Zenn (2016) noted that the establishment of Boko Haram as a terror group took place in Maiduguri, Borno state capital in 2002. It was headed by an Islamic theologian named Muhammad Yusuf who was trained as a Salafi sect of Islam. He was a Kanuri by ethnic extraction from Borno state of North-east Nigeria. The insurgency spread to the neighbouring African states Chad, Niger and Cameroon. The recruitment of new members into the terror group as perceived by some of the participants in an interview undertaken by Preri, and associate suggested that the former governor of Borno state, Ali Modu Sheriff, also a Kanuri man contributed immensely in strengthening the movement. The Boko Haram leader had the massive youth following which became the basis for the then governor's political prowess in the state. The deal between Muhammad Yusuf and Sheriff on the exchange of the youths' support in his bid to head the state as governor; while on the other hand, if he became governor after elections to implement Sharia law. He promised to appoint members of the Boko Haram key official positions in his administration. (Preri, & Zenn, 2016).

Sheriff approved the building of the Boko Haram mosque alongside Ibn Taimiyya headquarters in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, after he became the governor in 2003. He then operated a micro finance scheme and wooed the women and unemployed youths. Yusuf became impatient after one of his closest associates, Alhaji Buji Foi was appointed commissioner of religious affairs. His impatience made Foi to resign from the governor's cabinet as a result of Sheriff's failure to fulfil his earlier pledge to implement Sharia in the state (Preri, *et al.*, 2016). Young men and women became instrumental in the earlier days of the Boko Haram movement, as such benefitting from the group's largess. He became their teacher and made them to pay zakat (charitable donation). However, many lives were lost as a result of clashes between the group and security operatives in July 2009 in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state. Furthermore, Yusuf was extra-judiciously killed by the police after his arrest which triggered his followers to intensify kidnapping, killing and bombing places of worship- churches, mosques and various public places like schools, markets and motor parks. Most of its members had their training in Afghanistan and Mauritania (Onuoha, 2010). Zenn and Pearson (2014) claimed that about 35,000 people were rendered victims who lost their lives from 2010. The leader of the insurgent group, Abubakar Shekau did not give any chance for peace-making. He rather called upon other sister insurgent groups such as Al-Qaeda in in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Shabaab, headed by the late Abu Musa'ab al-Zarqawi, Ayman al-Zawahri, respectively (Zenn, & Pearson, 2014).

Ugwumba (2015) noted that the fight and incessant attacks in Borno state in particular and other states within the Northeastern region of Nigeria forced many parents to withdraw their children from schools. Many of them also migrated from the states to other nearby states and Cameroon and Niger Republic. Therefore, education in the Northeastern Nigeria has been disrupted as observed by the Amnesty International. In relation to admission into junior secondary schools in Mungono town of Borno state only 60 eligible out of the 160 who applied for admission in the country. About 15,000 under-aged in Borno state had self-withdrawal due to high level of insecurity which resulted to destruction of school facilities. Even those pupils sitting for examination were doing so in hiding places. On their way home, the children had to hide their school uniforms and bags to avoid being harassed by members of the insurgent groups (Power, 2013). In spite of their claim for Islamic jihad, the Boko Haram fighters hold the ideology of violence against Christian women, children and humanity as a whole irrespective of their religious affiliations. They terrorized Christian communities as their slogan goes "War on Christians" (Barkindo, *et al.*, 2016). This indicates the level of victimization against

women under the guise of religion. The terrorists try to justify their destructive actions against humanity in the name of the so-called "holy struggles against evils" (Jihad). This action distorts with a lot of confusion thereby twisting the Islamic concept of Jihad (TAHIR-UL-QADRI, 2010). This brings about misdirecting of the young Muslims to fall prey to destructive ideas. The members practice Islamic rituals and other forms of worship to attract more membership. This confuses the young Muslims alongside some clerics and intellectual in society. However, the rise of the insurgent group coincided with the introduction of Shariah in twelve out of the nineteen states of the Northern geo-political zone of Nigeria.

**The Shekau led Boko Haram was seen to have promoted narrow gender roles among male and female. They were known to have enforced stringent rules on dress code on women. They also enforced strict rules on women's sexual conduct and instituted some abusive and discriminatory acts against the womenfolk. They again encouraged segregation among pupils in schools. Women were openly flogged for fornication. Norms were gendered by Boko Haram through listing of values opposing "the rights and privileges of Women, the idea of homosexuality, lesbianism..rape of infants.. blue films, prostitution.." coupled with beauty pageants as they were considered as Western ideals (Zenn, 2013).**

They succeeded in converting thousands of mostly uneducated under-aged into a conglomerate of serving soldiers. This trend has escalated armed conflicts in African countries like Nigeria. They are either abducted at home, on the streets and school premises. Their duties pertained to suicide missions, spying and messengers. A great number of the 11 million out-of-school under-aged are from the North-eastern region of Nigeria (Strochlic, 2014).

### Method

Available scholarly literature has been reviewed by the researchers to conceptually explore tradition, child labour, religion and insecurity as factors impeding the educational achievement of women and under-aged in the North-eastern Nigeria.

### Results

The findings indicated that people's traditions, child labour, religious misconception, lack of security due to the ongoing insurgency are drastically affecting the educational achievement of under-aged and women. The married women who might have been enlisted into any adult education cannot attend their classes because of the violence by the insurgents in the region.

### Discussions

Lack of parental literacy indicated in this review as the major factor challenging the existence of the

womenfolk and educational achievement of under-age Onoyase, (2007). The cultural or traditional practice of related to the perception by parents of the status attached to the female under-aged as a weaker sex in society Galadanci (2007). Despite the efforts put in by international groups like the UNICEF, ILO, among others, many parents are still curtailing the education of the female under-aged. Young girls are sent to marriage without allowing them to continue schooling as married women. In Nigeria, for example, many female under-aged are sent to hawk certain petty commodities at public places. Some are sent to farm land to serve as labourers for cheap labour. The same trend has been found being practiced in Indonesia, Pakistan among others. Caroleo, Giannelli, & Pastore, (2016) argued that female under-aged are converted into child labourers. They are serving as home-workers in other people's homes. From 2000 to 2001 UNICEF's study indicated that children are working under unbearable condition of service. The study by Behrman *et al.* (1999) and Basu (2006) resulted that the welfare of children's education depends on how frequently they are close to their parents, especially mothers.

Galadanci (2007) noted that the tradition of sending children to study religious knowledge away from home under the care of teachers who are not employed by the government initiates them into begging. The teachers are not paid by the parents nor the government. The under-aged almajiri (student) roams the streets in the day time and in the evening in search of food from house to house and other public places (Onoyase, 2007). The zakat (alms) that supposed to assist the have-nots in society as suggested by the Islamic jurisprudence is not being organized the way it is advised by the doctrines. Instead of giving the zakat to the right persons in society, the wealth meant for the alms giving is either diverted or the appropriate persons to pay out are not ready to give. This is why many poor parents cannot enroll their children in the formal educational institution. The children sent to such tsangaya system for education are now left with the burden of searching for food instead of concentrating on their study. They are now exposed to certain social vices in the public places they roam in search of food. The teachers also make the children participate in cheap labour to enable them have money to buy soap, slippers and other things of their needs. The monies realised in such begging activity are not sufficient to pay their hospital bills whenever they fall ill. However, they are sent to far distant places to be educated (Adejumo, *et al.*, 2011).

In the aspect of religious misconception, many female under-aged are sent to marriage by parents in order to dodge their parental responsibilities. This is in disarray with the UN's stipulation of 18 years for adulthood among children across the

globe. The early marriage among under-aged stunts the education of female children, hence the lack of continuity of their schooling after the wedding takes place (Walker, 2013). Furthermore, in Nigeria parents tend to send their male children to school up to graduation, unlike their female counterparts. The fathers prefer male under-aged education to that of female. Male child is reckoned as the replacement of their fathers in the family setting in terms of shouldering responsibilities. Therefore, the female child is sent on petty trading by hawking some minor items in public places; while their brothers are sent to school (Yar'zever, *et al.*, 2013). Boko Haram as the group is called is membered by young men and women. This is due to their inability to acquire jobs although some of them were found to be employees, but because of the adulterated belief being taught by the group leaders, they became members. They are involved in killing, kidnapping and bombing in the North-east region of Nigeria. Despite their claim of Islam as their religion, they have been witnessed killing Muslims, Christians and all individuals from different religious affiliations. The group is said to have been linked to other international terror groups as its members received training from Afghanistan and Mauritania (Onuoha, 2010). They terrorized Christian communities as their slogan goes "War on Christians" (Barkindo, *et al.*, 2016). This indicates the level of victimization against women under the guise of religion. The terrorists try to justify their destructive actions against humanity in the name of the so-called "holy struggles against evils" (Jihad). This action distorts with a lot of confusion thereby twisting the Islamic concept of Jihad TAHIR-UL-QADRI, (2010). Most out of the 11 million out-of-school under-aged are from the North-eastern region of Nigeria (Strochlic, 2014).

### Conclusion

All the efforts made by the governments and some non-governmental organisations did not usher in any sustainable development in the education of under-aged and women in the North-east Nigeria. For instance, the establishment of adult education in Nigeria has done not enough in assisting the women and their men counterparts to transform them into educated adults. However, children are not sufficiently enrolled and assisted to reach to graduation by their parents, mostly due to poverty and tradition, coupled with religious misconception among parents.

Widows and divorcees have for a very long time been at the receiving end of the societal ills. Many of them have been left alone to cater for themselves and their children at the demise of their husbands or when they are divorced by them. Moreover, children of such divorcees and or widows are not given the required care by the society and all the tiers of government in Nigeria.



The cankerworm of corruption is also another impediment against the education of women and children in the North-eastern Nigeria. For example, between June and July 2016 many trailers full of food meant for the thousands of internally displaced people in several camps provided by the Nigerian government were carted away by those entrusted with the responsibility of distributing among the victims of the displacement caused by the dreaded Boko Haram insurgents in the region. Many people have been made into the status of internally displaced by the crises. Teachers and their pupils have been also traumatized. Anyanwu (2016) noted that a provision for palliatives such as foods, beddings, bags and was made by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

Despite the Quran kicking against compulsion in religion, the insurgents forced people from other faith to convert to their own religion. Moreover, the Chibok girls were mostly Christians, but all were made to symbolize Islam under the custody of the group members. The Quran says: There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error. And he who rejects false deities and believes in Allah has grasped a firm handhold which will never break, Allah is Hearer, Knower (Quran 2:256).

From the quoted verse, it is apparent that the religion called Islam does not support violence or forcing other people to embrace it. Therefore, more investigation should be intensified to dig up the powers behind the terror groups as they claim Islam and coincidentally their leaders bearing the same Abubakar (name of one of the four disciples of Prophet Muhammad) – Abubakar, Umar, Usman and Ali. ISIS is headed by Abubakar Al-Baghdadi (a MOSSAD agent), while the Boko Haram is under Abubakar Shekau, although he has been claimed to have been killed several times by the Nigerian Military during their operations.

### **Suggestions**

The researchers suggested that there should be an improvement in the condition of children and women's educational pursuit to enable them enjoy their fundamental right of acquiring the basic knowledge in accordance with the provision of the United Nations.

The womenfolk should be provided with a conducive atmosphere of labour market such that they participate in the socio-economic activities and diseases like AIDS and VVF in their respective communities. This could be only achieved through the urgent improvement of their children's welfare in terms of their education, health and nutrition among others like immunization against certain child related diseases.

Despite all efforts put in by teachers in teaching under-aged, they are being criticised by parents and

public, including their students whenever their performances are lower than expectation. Unfortunately, parents among other critics of teachers shy away from their own quota of responsibility to assist their children at home for homework and other interventions they supposed to engage in outside school hours. Therefore, child education should not be hinged only on the shoulders of the teachers, but a collective effort must be invested in collaboration between teachers, parents and other concerned individuals like the members of their communities through NGOs and community societies.

All the perpetrators of corruption should be exposed and punished accordingly. This cannot be achieved without making some amendments in the constitution whereby certain loopholes were created as a way out for those accused of corruption. For example, while in Nigeria a government official is prosecuted for involvement in tampering with the public funds and is offered bail, in China and other Asian countries they are punished without any long legal process. Moreover, the politicians accused of administrative misdeeds are not punished due to the provision for immunity while in office, instead of being punished to serve as a deterrent to others. Therefore, the idea of "justice delayed is justice denied" should be reconsidered to enable others learn from the cases of those found guilty of certain offences.

There should be a provision for more organized orphanages for socially unprotected children and centers for learning handy craft for needy women to enable them become contributors to the societal development. Weaving, soap making, sewing and other petty trading should be provided for such women through small scale loans and conducive refund conditions to assist their individual economy. The loan facility should not be based on women groups as many of them are being headed by elites who are selective in recommending whom to be given the loans.

Psychologically, teachers have been traumatized by the experience with bombing, kidnapping, shooting and brazen slaughtering of youth in the name of religion. Some of them saw how their colleagues and students were killed through maiming by members of the terror group. They became engrossed with difficulties and distractions by the threats from the insurgents thereby unable to perform their duty of teaching. Teachers become so afraid to the extent they kept away from schools for long. This situation forced them to close the schools without any resumption dates in view. The teachers should therefore be rehabilitated by the government and other humanitarian organisations for them to be able to perform their duties, hence the return of peaceful atmosphere in the one-time violence engulfed area.



Ugwumba, (2015) affirmed that the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) hold their priorities based on the objectives of the body. They have the vision of reducing poverty and hunger. They are to assist in the sectors of health, education, among others. In view of the efforts within the last decade, there has been a reduction by more than 38 million of out-of-school under-aged alongside slimming of the gender-gap between the male and the female in search of formal education. Therefore, parents and traditional stakeholders should encourage the education of their children without gender difference. This will help in achieving a formidable sustainable development in the country.

All the perpetrators of all security challenges at all levels should be treated with treasonable offence legal provisions to usher in sufficient tranquility in the country. Those in charge of education institutions in all categories should be checkmated in the direction of protecting the interests of the children entrusted under their care in terms of their feeding, health and fundamental human rights. This will avoid the continuation of sexual abuse of under-aged by their teachers and or other members of the public. For example, the case of sexual abuse at a secondary school in Kano recently is an indication that many children are subjected to such inhuman treatment by the teachers that supposed to be replica of their students' parents among others.

The Northeast state governments in collaboration with international humanitarian groups and the federal administration should make provision for adequate security to safeguard the schools and other public structures against any further attacks on children and other members of the public.

Regular inspections of the education sector by the federal ministry of education and should ensure the maintenance of standard in all ramifications. The almajiri system should be incorporated into the

government annual budgets. The teachers should be paid monthly like any other government employee. The almajiri schools should be provided within the grassroots to enable the children attend them without going far away from their parents to avoid the perpetuation of child labour, child sexual abuse and human trafficking. Such schools should be based on gender category whereby the female under-aged schools should be separated from the males. This is because, in recent times there has been a new development in the almajiri system where some Mallams (teachers) have traveled far from their localities to a far distant location with female under-aged in the name of seek for religious knowledge.

### Contribution and Further Study

From the literature gathered, it is apparent that tradition, poverty, insecurity and people's religious perceptions contribute in the downfall of educational achievement among women and under-aged in the North-eastern Nigeria. Methodologically, there is need for more gaps to be filled to make a theoretical contribution by developing a model on the educational achievement of under-aged and women in society. Practically still, the government and other humanitarian bodies to investigate the low educational achievement among women and under-aged. For further study, this research considers in the future an empirical research to be able to source data from both the victims and the stakeholders of tradition in the North-eastern Nigeria on the relationship between tradition, religion, socio-economic factors and the educational achievement of women and under-aged. Preferably, mixed methods should be applied including simple regression in the quantitative aspect, while on the other hand, Nvivo 10 version should be used in qualitative analysis.

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